

# Jackson Hill Journal

Jackson Hill Neighborhood Association — Winter 2009/2010 Issue

## WELCOME TO OUR FIRST NEWSLETTER!

**HAPPY HOLIDAYS AND BEST WISHES FOR 2010!** We've gathered a variety of resources for this newsletter that you, as a resident of our Jackson Hill community, will definitely find helpful. Check out these features:

- News from the community or area
- Calendar for events and reminders
- Photos of interest
- Resources for information about our community



When you need to know what's going on in our community, this should be your first stop! So, come join us at the meetings as frequently as you'd like and don't forget to pick up your copy today!



### HABITAT FOR HUMANITY GROUND BLESSING EVENT!

The Jackson Hill Neighborhood Association is proud to announce that on Wednesday, August 11, 2009, The Muskegon County Habitat for Humanity and Women Build 2009 held a Ground Blessing Ceremony at the new sight of Habitat Home #90 located at 604 Leonard Street. We send warm congratulations to the future habitat homeowners, John & Florence McMann! Please continue to support this blessed project.

If you'd like to learn more about the Muskegon County Habitat for Humanity Program, please feel free to call (231) 727-6020 or visit the website at:

[www.muskegonhabitat.org](http://www.muskegonhabitat.org).



### NOTEWORTHY NEWS!



Board of Directors for more information.

**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!!** The Jackson Hill Neighborhood Association is always looking for volunteers in the community. Please free to attend the meetings or contact one of our

### MARK YOUR CALENDARS!



#### Jackson Hill Neighborhood Association MEETINGS:

Every 3rd Tuesday of each month at 6:00pm at Smith-Ryerson Community Center.

### SMITH-RYERSON PARK PROJECT



#### A NEW LOOK!

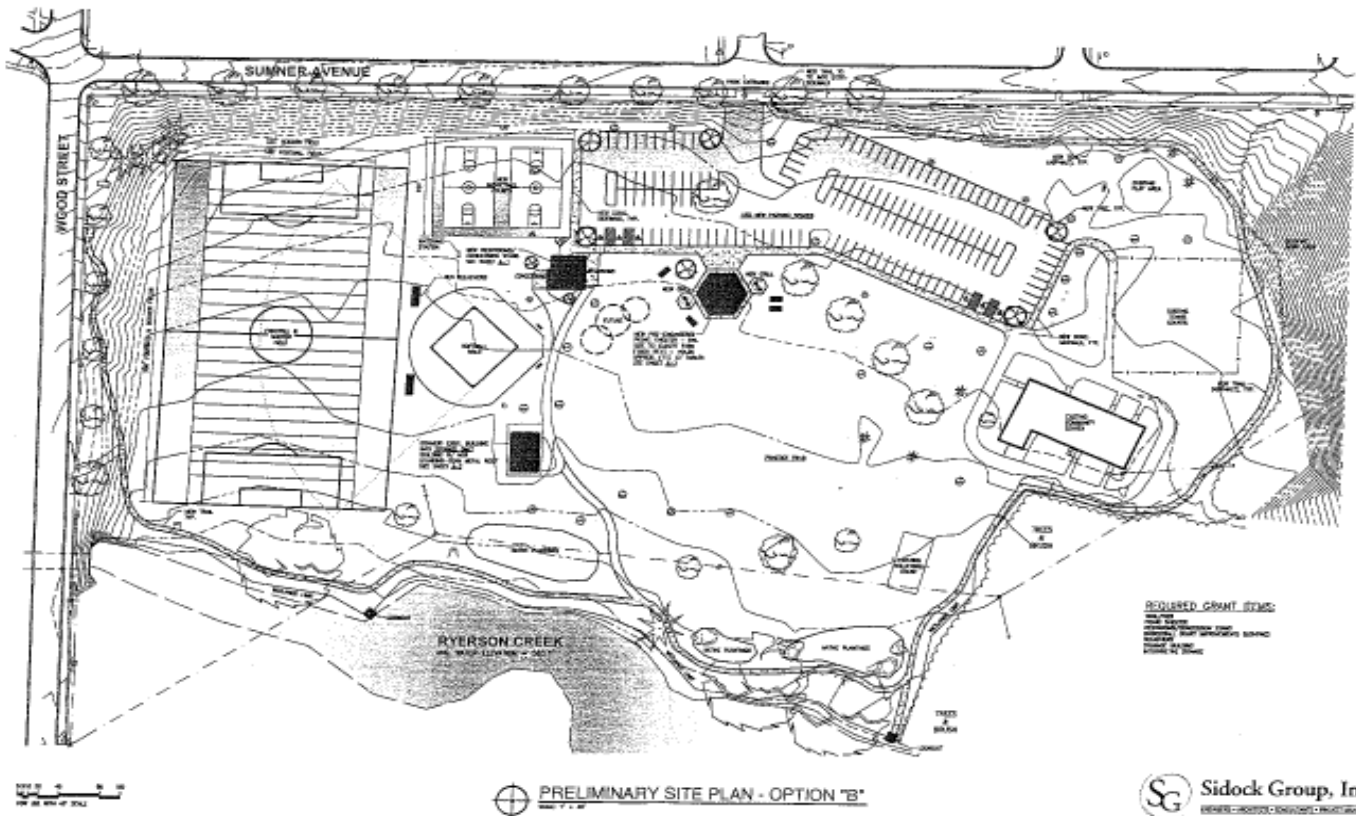
#### A NEW ATTITUDE!

In 2007, the City was approved for a \$433,400 MNRTF grant for the Smith-Ryerson Park. This was for an accessible restroom/concession stand, irrigation, reconstruction of the

basketball courts, removal of one baseball field, construction of a pier, trail along the creek, striping of the parking lots, one picnic shelter with picnic tables and grills, and bleachers.



## SMITH-RYSERON PARK PROJECT (cont'd)



## HEALTHY LIVING FOCUS OF GRANT FOR Jackson Hill Neighborhood

By [Heidi Fenton](#) | [Muskegon Chronicle](#)



Monday, October 26, 2009

MUSKEGON — Brian Clincy said he's known for awhile that healthy living is largely a matter of making proactive choices, like walking instead of driving. What he didn't realize is how much a person's surroundings can dictate those choices.

As a resident of Muskegon's Jackson Hill Neighborhood, Clincy is part of a team of people developing an "action plan" for healthier living among local residents. The neighborhood is at the northern edge of Muskegon, bounded by Muskegon Lake, Ryerson Creek and Getty Street. It was recently chosen as one of 43 communities nationwide to receive grant money sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other health care organizations. Jackson Hill received \$15,000 toward the assessment phase of a healthy living project. "The program is geared toward creating policies making the healthier choice the easier choice — getting people to be more physically active and making it a more natural thing," Clincy said. Residents on a Community Health Action Response Team visited local organizations, schools, and health care providers and attended a conference in Alexandria, Va. Jill Montgomery-Keast, a quality improvement specialist for Public Health — Muskegon County, applied for the grant. She said the neighborhood fit the program's parameters based on local economics, availability of fresh food, and "their overall access to health and keeping themselves healthy."

"Quality of life is what it's all about," she said. Montgomery-Keast said the socioeconomic issues Muskegon County faces, coupled with the urban location of Jackson Hill, limit neighborhood residents' ability to make healthy living choices. Clincy said residents aren't within walking distance of grocery stores, and some don't feel safe walking outside. The response team formed once the grant money was announced, and it devised a plan for healthier living based on the results of its assessment. The plan was submitted Sept. 30 for review by the participating organizations. Clincy said the plan includes ideas like getting more fresh fruits and vegetables in school cafeterias and developing safer walking routes for children. It also addresses issues of getting healthier food for families. "Since we have the most undeveloped space in the city, we really want to plan on doing a big garden with apple trees as well as some of the other big fruits and vegetables that we have room to grow," he said. For now, the response team is awaiting word on whether its plan has been approved and on what criteria additional funding will be available. Montgomery-Keast said she's excited to see opportunities for health improvements in the neighborhood. "Keeping people healthy before they have the chance to get sick is probably the most efficient and effective way to address chronic diseases in our community," she said. "It's a proactive prevention focus."



## **FROEBEL SCHOOL STILL AVAILABLE**

**M-Live Article from November 30, 2009**

MUSKEGON — Even though they've blown the water out of the pipes and turned off the heat at Froebel School, Muskegon Public Schools officials remain hopeful someone will want the historic, shuttered building.

Once the pride of the district, the school that was built in 1930 with a terra cotta roof and marble interior features is an unwanted shell in the city's Jackson Hill neighborhood.

The school district hasn't even been able to give away the 56,000-square-foot former elementary school that eventually became a special education facility before closing for good more than six years ago.

"We really do not have a party interested in Froebel," said Gary Privasky, the school district's executive director of administrative and financial services.

After announcing a year ago they were looking to give away Froebel and the former Phillips Elementary School, district officials heard from several organizations interested in Froebel.

But the organizations either eventually lost interest — because of zoning hurdles or renovation costs — or were deemed by the district to not be financially stable enough to give the building a new long-term life.

One of the most promising proposals seemed to come from the Muskegon Housing Commission, which had proposed low-income apartments.

But Kevin Donovan, vice president of the Muskegon school board, said the idea of getting the school zoned for that use was daunting.

"The city doesn't want any more low-income housing," Donovan said. "They feel the city has enough low-income housing so they don't want anymore."

The facility, which has an auditorium, seems ideal for an assisted living facility, but renovation costs are too high.

"When you start looking at the cost to bring that back up to code, the folks who are in that line of business crunch the numbers and say 'We could build a new building,'" Donovan said.

If anything, a company may be interested in demolishing the building and salvaging the valuable marble and terra cotta, he said.

Neighborhood residents have been hoping the building wouldn't remain empty, said Billie Joy Holmes, president of the Jackson Hill Neighborhood Association.

"It's a concern of ours," Holmes said. "We really wanted to know what they planned on doing with it. It's a beautiful building."

She said neighbors keep an eye on the building and its grounds which take up a full block of Jackson Avenue, between Wood and Marshall streets.

"We try to watch out for it," she said.

The school district is in the process of transferring ownership of the much newer Phillips building, which was built in 1946, to West Michigan Therapy. The substance abuse treatment facility is eyeing Phillips, at 1442 E. Broadway, for housing for the homeless.

This will be the first winter that heat will be turned off inside Froebel. Water was shut off to prevent burst pipes, and Donovan, who is president of Muskegon Construction, said the structure should remain sound. However, interior paint and plaster likely will deteriorate, he said.

"I hate to see it sit there empty to start the beginning of its demise," Donovan said.



### **Web Reference:**

[http://www.mlive.com/news/muskegon/index.ssf/2009/11/despite\\_efforts\\_to\\_find\\_new\\_ow.html](http://www.mlive.com/news/muskegon/index.ssf/2009/11/despite_efforts_to_find_new_ow.html)

## **CONSERVATION DISTRICT PLANS TO REMODEL RICHARDS PARK**

City of Muskegon officials and the Muskegon Conservation District are exploring ways for plans of restoration for new offices, a community center and environmental/recreational uses for the city of Muskegon's 14-acre Richards Park.

With a long-term agreement, the district would begin to secure public and private funds for what could be a \$1 million development in hopes to have the building constructed in 12 to 18 months.

Besides the building, a preliminary site plan shows demonstration gardens, connections to the adjacent Shoreline Trail, a rustic camping/rally area for bicyclists and motorcyclists, nature trails, fishing decks and a canoe/kayak launch.

The 14-acre Richards Park property is on the far east end of Ottawa Street. Commissioner Clara Shepherd said Richards Park has languished as a public space for more than 40 years. This plan would add to the city and provide a place for people to get close to nature.





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Neighborhood  
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*Newsletter*



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questions about the JHNA  
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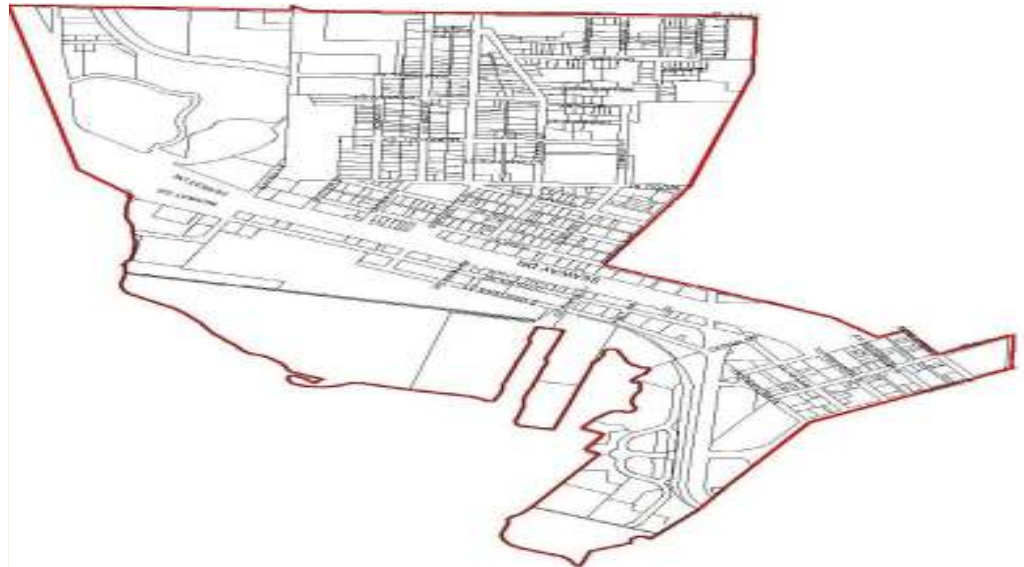
**Jackson Hill neighborhood  
residents care about the  
safety in our community.**

**SILENT OBSERVER LINE:  
(231) 72-CRIME  
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The Neighborhood Associations of Muskegon (NAM) is made up of presidents and/or representative from each of the City of Muskegon 15 neighborhood associations. Each neighborhood association represents a particular neighborhood within the city. NAM meets once a month with City department personnel to discuss various issues of concerns within the community.

***Feel to come out and JOIN US!***

**City of Muskegon  
Neighborhood Boundaries**



## **The Jackson Hill Neighborhood Association Board of Directors**

The Jackson Hill neighborhood is located at the northern edge of the City of Muskegon, bounded by Muskegon Lake, Ryerson Creek, and Getty Avenue. We are home to such attractions as Fisherman's Landing, Richards Park, and the Muskegon Farmer's Market.

The neighborhood meetings are held every 3rd Tuesday of each month at **Smith-Ryerson Community Center**.

We begin at 6:00pm sharp!

### **UPCOMING 2009/2010 MEETING DATES:**

Every 3rd Tuesday of each month at 6:00pm at  
Smith-Ryerson Community Center.

**President:** Billie Joy Holmes  
**Contact:** (231) 722-3066

**Vice-President:** TaShunda Poole

**Secretary:** Susan Cochran

**Co-Treasurer:** John Barrett

**Co-Treasurer:** Calvin Rucks

**Organizer/Director:** Perry Dennie  
**Contact:** (231) 343-7568

**Organizer/Director:** Stephon Sherrod  
**Contact:** (231) 578-4010

**Community Officer:** Ofc. Mike Lamsma  
**Contact:** (231) 724-6735